Robert and Renée Belfer have made a $10 million gift to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Capital Projects Campaign, supporting essential campus expansion and revitalization projects at Dana-Farber. The gift will help foster collaboration and innovation among the Institute’s world-class scientists, and pave the way for developing the next generation of cancer treatments.

Dana-Farber’s Robert and Renée Belfer Center for Applied Cancer Science, a major driver of industry partnerships and drug development at Dana-Farber, will move into the new Longwood Center alongside renowned scientists from Dana-Farber’s chemistry and biology programs. Working closely under the same roof, these scientists and chemists will be poised to accelerate the pace of novel drug discovery at Dana-Farber and deliver new treatments to cancer patients faster.

“The move into the Longwood Center strategically positions the Belfer Center to further build alliances with big pharma to engineer revolutionary therapies to treat cancer,” said Robert Belfer. “I hope that our commitment will ultimately help Dana-Farber achieve its mission of curing cancer.”

Furthermore, the Belfers will give an additional $10 million to Dana-Farber, provided that the Institute reaches certain milestones in commercial revenue over the next 10 years and invests this income in its research efforts. This challenge encourages Dana-Farber to continue to forge additional partnerships with drug development and biotechnology companies in the decade ahead.

In recognition of their new commitment, the Belfers’ name will be added above the Brookline Avenue entrance of the Longwood Center building. Additionally, Dana-Farber’s Office of Research and Technology Ventures will be renamed Dana-Farber Cancer Institute has been the top ranked cancer hospital in New England by U.S. News and World Report for 14 consecutive years, and is the only cancer center in the country ranked in the top 4 for both adult and pediatric cancer programs.

Robert and Renée Belfer make transformational gift to accelerate drug development

FIGHTING CANCER IS THE NEW BLACK

Two luminaries joined the DFMC team this year, shining a bright light on the team’s collective dedication and passion for the Dana-Farber mission. Uzo Aduba, Emmy Award-winning actress on the Netflix original series, “Orange Is the New Black,” and Shonda Schilling, New York Times best-selling author of The Best Kind of Different, Our Family’s Journey with Asperger’s Syndrome, and wife of former Boston Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling, were both excited to join the 2015 DFMC roster.

Aduba, a Medfield, Mass., native, always wanted to run the prestigious Boston Marathon, and running it for a cause close to her heart made it even more meaningful.

“As someone who grew up outside of Boston, I’ve always respected Dana-Farber’s groundbreaking work in cancer research,” said Aduba. “During every mile, I felt inspired by Dana-Farber’s lifesaving mission, and energized knowing that the exceptional fundraising accomplishments of the DFMC team will help change the future of cancer treatment. I feel so proud to be a part of that.”

Schilling, a cancer survivor herself, ran with DFMC to honor and celebrate the Dana-Farber staff who cared for her husband while he underwent cancer treatment.

“The people at Dana-Farber were so kind, and so understanding of what we were going through,” said Schilling. “It feels great to raise awareness of the critical cancer research being done at Dana-Farber through my running.”

The 2015 Dana-Farber Marathon Challenge (DFMC) team, including more than 550 runners from all over the country, successfully completed the 119th Boston Marathon® April 20. Running for its 26th year, DFMC is on track to raise its goal of $5.2 million for the Claudia Adams Barr Program in Innovative Basic Cancer Research at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.
Dana-Farber project merits $1.75 million CDC grant

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has awarded a $1.75 million, 5-year grant to the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer in the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute—one of only seven organizations to earn this competitive grant.

When it was established in 2005, the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer was the first program of its kind in New England and one of the first in the U.S. The CDC funding will further efforts to provide services for women age 44 and younger who have been diagnosed with breast cancer. Program staff members provide women with personal contact at an early oncology appointment to introduce the program, educational opportunities, and access to support groups. Additionally, funds will help support robust survivorship navigation, national webinars, and dedicated tumor boards—a treatment planning approach in which a number of doctors who are experts in different specialties review and discuss the medical condition and treatment options of a patient.

To date, program services have been available to all patients at Dana-Farber’s main campus. This additional funding will allow women seen at the Institute’s satellite and community sites to access these beneficial services.

“This funding helps expand our support services to help more young women with breast cancer and develop a national network for providers and patients,” said Ann Partridge, MD, MPH, founder and director of the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer, and director of the Adult Survivorship Program at Dana-Farber.

Approximately 11 percent of all new cases of breast cancer in the United States are found in women younger than 45 years of age. While breast cancer diagnosis and treatment are difficult for women of any age, young survivors face unique concerns about parenting young children, future fertility, managing careers, and sustaining treatment are difficult for women of any age, young survivors face unique concerns about parenting young children, future fertility, managing careers, and sustaining relationships. This major investment by the CDC underscores the importance of patient-centered care pioneered by Dana-Farber.

Dana-Farber’s high level of federal funding is a credit to donors who have made gifts in support of early-stage research and pilot programs, enabling our investigators to bring novel initiatives far enough along to attract subsequent federal grants. Many ambitious efforts that fall outside federal grant priorities would otherwise stagnate were it not for the foresight and vision of donors to fund innovative approaches. This synergy of support propels Dana-Farber’s success as one of the foremost leaders in the worldwide effort to conquer cancer in its many forms.

Funding for the project reported in this publication is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Cancer Prevention and Control.

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Impact is distributed in the greater Boston area and around the globe. Thank you for the tremendous difference you make in the lives of our patients and their families.

Sincerely,

Susan S. Paresky
Senior Vice President for Development
The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society continues to expand blood cancer research at Dana-Farber

As pediatricians, Roger Medel, MD, and Virginia “Ginger” Turner Medel, MD, have dedicated their lives to advancing the health and care of children. After Ginger’s sister was treated at Dana-Farber, Roger and Ginger began to attend and support the Institute’s annual Discovery Celebration gala in Palm Beach, where they met Stephen Sallan, MD, Dana-Farber chief of staff emeritus. United by their passion for improving the lives of children, Sallan and the Medels began to discuss Dana-Farber’s premier discovery science and pediatric care.

“We were impressed with the quality and level of care that was provided at Dana-Farber,” said Roger. “After meeting Steve and some of the Institute’s other incredible scientists, we started to think about how we could help them advance their work.”

In 2014, Roger and Ginger gave $2.25 million to establish the Four C’s Fund, a dual fund supporting two groundbreaking pediatric research initiatives: the Cancer Vulnerabilities Project and Individualized Cancer Therapy 2 (iCAT2). The former is a pioneering project under the direction of Kimberly Stegmaier, MD, to capitalize on improved genomic technologies and uncover new, treatable weaknesses in pediatric cancers, which could drive the development of more effective therapies. Under the leadership of Katherine Janeway, MD, and Charles Roberts, MD, PhD, iCAT2 is an innovative study to evaluate whether genetic sequencing information can inform improved treatment decisions and outcomes for pediatric patients. iCAT2 will reveal key mutations linked to pediatric cancer and enable investigators to identify patients who could benefit from existing drugs or clinical trials.

Inspired by these projects, Roger and Ginger’s close friends Miguel Fernandez, Cesar Alvarez, and Manuel Kadre each made generous gifts to the fund, bringing its total to $3.6 million. All originally from Cuba, Fernandez, Alvarez, Kadre, and Roger came up with the name “the Four Cs”—which stands for Cubans Caring Children’s Cancers—to reflect their shared heritage and collective commitment to pediatric health.

“Roger, Ginger, and their generous friends are supporting two critical initiatives to expand our understanding of the drivers of pediatric cancers and how best to move forward in developing new therapies,” said Sallan. “[Their united commitment is immensely inspiring, and will continue to impact our youngest patients for years to come.”

Roger, Ginger, and their friends recall a time when being diagnosed with childhood cancer presented few opportunities for a cure. Recognizing the tremendous progress at Dana-Farber and the need for additional advances, they decided to team up and help propel efforts to overcome the most challenging forms of the disease.

“Due in large part to the work done at Dana-Farber, survival rates have really turned around.” —Roger Medel, MD

The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society® (LLS) recently awarded eight grants totaling more than $4.5 million to six Dana-Farber researchers, continuing its commitment to eradicating blood cancers and improving the quality of life of blood cancer patients and their families.

Catherine Wu, MD, was awarded the Quest for CURES (QFC) grant. QFC grants help to identify and advance safer, more effective treatment standards for blood cancer patients. Wu’s research focuses on the biology of genetic and epigenetic heterogeneity, and its impact on chronic lymphocytic leukemia (CLL).

Wu also received a Career Development Program (CDP) grant, as did Dipanjan Chowdhury, PhD, and Loten Walensky, MD, PhD. Chowdhury’s research focuses on non-coding RNAs, and the impact on DNA repair and chromosomal translocations in lymphoma. With his grant, Walensky is uncovering new mechanisms to reactivate cell death in hematologic cancers. Wu is using this grant to understand and address clonal heterogeneity and clonal evolution in CLL.

LLS awarded Screen to Lead Program (SLP) grants to Kenneth Anderson, MD, director of the Jerome Lipper Multiple Myeloma Center and LeBow Institute for Myeloma Therapeutics, and Ruben Carrasco, MD. LLS created SLP grants to support drug discovery related to blood cancers. Anderson’s grant will be used to study the inhibition of a pathway that controls cell growth and the formation of tumors. Carrasco’s work will center on high-throughput screening of small molecule inhibitors of a key signaling pathway that controls tumor cell proliferation and survival.

Steven Treon, MD, PhD, director of the Bing Center for Waldenstrom’s Macroglobulinemia, and Wu each accepted a Translational Research Program (TRP) grant. TRP grants fund new research to accelerate bench-to-bedside treatment and cures for leukemia, lymphoma, and myeloma. Treon’s research examines common genetic mutations that serve as drug targets in Waldenstrom’s macroglobulinemia. Wu’s focus is on a personalized vaccine for early CLL, that targets abnormal proteins in cancer cells.

Having received three unique LLS-funded grants, Wu is particularly enthusiastic about this collective funding that will enable her to dive deeper into her CLL research. “It’s an honor to have LLS support my vision,” said Wu. “My team and I feel so very fortunate to work alongside an organization that invests ample resources to finding a cure for blood cancers. Together, we’re changing the future of blood cancer therapies.”

To celebrate almost $60 million in cumulative giving, and nearly 40 years of partnership, Dana-Farber hosted an event in April to celebrate LLS. LLS leaders, board members, volunteers, and staff from the National Office and Massachusetts Chapter gathered at Dana-Farber to meet with LLS-funded Dana-Farber faculty and staff and discuss the progress made as a result of that support.

“Our partnership with Dana-Farber embodies the LLS mission,” said Louis DeGennaro, PhD, president and CEO of LLS. “We are proud to support Dana-Farber and the innovative researchers who work tirelessly to unveil new diagnostics and therapies.”

Virginia “Ginger” Turner Medel, MD, and Roger Medel, MD, have teamed up with their generous friends to establish the Four C’s Fund, a two-part fund driving innovative pediatric cancer research projects.

“Due in large part to the work done at Dana-Farber, survival rates have really turned around.” —Roger Medel, MD

Thank you for supporting Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund!
St. Baldrick’s Foundation awards nearly $1.4 million to pediatric cancer researchers

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“We are grateful that we can work together until the day we see 100 percent cures and long, healthy lives amongst survivors who are diagnosed with these diseases.”

— Kathleen Ruddy, chief executive officer of St. Baldrick’s Foundation

The St. Baldrick’s Foundation website leads with a powerful statement: “We’re raising money for childhood cancer research, because research saves lives.” Beginning as a response to a challenge between co-workers—“How will you give back in return for your own good fortune in business?”—St. Baldrick’s has shown its commitment to the cause by awarding more than $154 million in childhood cancer research grants, including a total of nearly $6 million to Dana-Farber.

In 2014, after a rigorous scientific peer review process, the foundation awarded three grants totaling nearly $1.4 million to Dana-Farber’s Pratiti Bandopadhayay, MBBS, PhD, Birgit Knoechel, MD, PhD, and Carlos Rodrigues-Galindo, MD, who are all working to find new treatment strategies and improve quality of life for pediatric cancer patients.

Bandopadhayay received a St. Baldrick’s Scholar Award to further her research into understanding the drug-resistance mechanisms in aggressive forms of medulloblastoma, the most common childhood brain cancer. She seeks to identify drugs that can be used in combination with JQ1, a drug developed at Dana-Farber, to treat medulloblastoma and other tumors driven by the MYC gene mutation.

Knoechel received the Porter Dowling St. Baldrick’s Fellow Award, based on progress to date, to continue research into T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL). This particular form of ALL initially responds well to chemotherapy, but develops resistance to the treatment over time. Knoechel is studying a compound that may reduce drug resistance in T-ALL and provide a new treatment approach for this disease.

Finally, St. Baldrick’s funding will support Rodrigues-Galindo, clinical director of the Pediatric Solid Tumor Center, program leader of Experimental Therapeutics, and medical director of the Clinical and Translational Investigation Program at Dana-Farber, in leading the development of the North American Consortium for Histocytosis for clinical and translational research in Langerhans cell histiocytosis (LCH). Understanding of this “orphan disease” has been limited by its rarity, so a consortium effort is critical to advancing clinical, translational, and basic research in LCH.

“These talented investigators are making strides toward improving survival rates in pediatric cancers,” said Stuart Orkin, MD, chair of Pediatric Oncology at Dana-Farber. “The generous funding from St. Baldrick’s makes possible this important research, helping to further our understanding of the biology of these diseases and develop effective treatment strategies for young patients.”

“St. Baldrick’s is so appreciative of all the work that has taken place at Dana-Farber to help kids diagnosed with cancers both in the U.S. and around the world,” said Kathleen Ruddy, chief executive officer of St. Baldrick’s Foundation. “We are grateful that we can work together until the day we see 100 percent cures and long, healthy lives amongst survivors who are diagnosed with these diseases.”

A new commitment to advance understanding of lung cancers

“Aren’t you still golfing?” Bruce Johnson, MD, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s chief clinical research officer, asked Anthony Sola this question every time he came in for an appointment. Tony, who always answered “yes,” lived life to the fullest despite his lung cancer diagnosis. Johnson’s kindness helped Tony and his wife, Donna, through treatment. Sadly, Tony, a non-smoker, succumbed to his illness in October 2014. Grateful for Johnson’s empathy throughout her husband’s treatment, Donna made a $100,000 gift to establish the Anthony F. Sola Fund for Lung Cancer Research.

“Dr. Johnson tried many treatments to help my husband,” Donna said. “I know in my heart he wanted so much to cure Tony. I hope this fund will help Dr. Johnson to find a cure for lung cancer. Supporting further research will help to find more treatment options so no family has to hear, ‘there are no alternative treatments currently available.’ ”

The Sola Fund will support the work of Dana-Farber’s Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology, which investigates genetic aberrations in different types of lung cancer with a focus on developing new treatments.

“This gift will allow researchers to continue to investigate the genetic makeup of lung cancers in non-smokers. Hopefully through this work we will identify targets and develop drugs to save more lives,” Johnson said.

“Supporting further research will help to find more treatment options so no family has to hear ‘there are no alternative treatments currently available.’ ”

— Donna Sola

Two new Jimmy Fund Co-Captains step up to the plate

Boston Red Sox third baseman Pablo Sandoval (left) and Brock Holt will serve as Jimmy Fund Co-Captains for the 2015 baseball season. As ambassadors for the Jimmy Fund, Holt and Sandoval will help raise awareness and support for adult and pediatric cancer research and patient care at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Holt and Sandoval, above with Jimmy Fund Clinic patient Max Mitchell (center) and his brother, Michael, join an impressive list of past Jimmy Fund Co-Captains, including Daniel Bard, Clay Buchholz, Jarrod Saltalamacchia, Tim Wakefield, and most recently in 2014, Will Middlebrooks and David Ross. Throughout the season Holt and Sandoval will visit adult and pediatric patients at the Institute, lend support to Jimmy Fund events, thank donors, and more. The Jimmy Fund is honored to be an official charity of the Boston Red Sox, an historic partnership that has spanned more than 60 years.

Donna Sola made a generous gift to established the Anthony F. Sola Fund for Lung Cancer Research, in honor of her late husband (above).
Leveraging the immune system to target HIV

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute was recently awarded a grant of more than $2.1 million by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support the preclinical testing of a preventative vaccine for human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV). Ellis Reinherz, MD, chief of the Laboratory of Immunobiology at Dana-Farber, is overseeing this generous two-year award.

Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) remains a serious global health concern, with approximately 35 million people estimated to be living with HIV and two million stricken with the virus each year. As part of Dana-Farber’s mission to advance the understanding, diagnosis, treatment, cure, and prevention of cancer and related diseases, investigators are driven to develop innovative therapies that could help to overcome this devastating infection.

Reinherz and his team are working to create vaccines that will enable a person’s immune system to destroy cancers as well as infections such as HIV/AIDS. Known as targeted vaccine design, this area of research remains one of the most promising areas of investigation in medical science, allowing the human body to leverage its intrinsic disease-fighting capabilities to target enemies such as HIV with sophisticated precision.

Conquering HIV, however, will not be easy. Due in large part to its high mutational rate, HIV-1 contains few areas of vulnerability that can be targeted to elicit a broadly protective immune response. In spite of this challenge, Reinherz and his team recently explored a key potential target: the membrane proximal external region (MPER) on a section of HIV’s envelope protein called gp41. By homing in on this region, which is highly conserved even among diverse HIV viral strains, researchers hope to spur the human body to produce antibodies that will protect the body against HIV-1/AIDS.

The grant will allow Reinherz and his team to conduct preclinical testing of a nanovaccine of their design aimed at provoking this powerful reaction from the immune system. By testing this approach in laboratory models, the investigators plan to establish a proof of concept that will then enable them to move this innovative nanovaccine into clinical trials.

“If successful in pre-clinical models, this research has tremendous potential to help us develop much-needed new therapeutic options for millions of people around the world who are living with HIV and AIDS,” said Reinherz. “Although AIDS continues to remain a major global health crisis, through these studies, we hope to bring the world one step closer to a cure.”

Schottensteins support gastric cancer research

When Sara Schottenstein was diagnosed with gastric cancer, she and her husband, Jeff, began looking for the most specialized and hopeful approach to cancer research and treatment.

“We quickly realized that if we consistently stayed ‘in-the-box’ and executed only the standard cancer treatment playbook, that we would miss out on some of the most hopeful breakthroughs taking place in cancer treatment,” said Jeff. “We wanted to be creative and progressive, while still being prudent and responsible.”

Then, the Schottensteins met Charles Fuchs, MD, MPH, and Adam Bass, MD, of Dana-Farber’s Gastrointestinal Cancer Center.

“They gave us wonderful insight into gastric cancers, as well as hope,” said Jeff. “Their brilliance combined with their compassion and responsiveness prompted us to quickly support their work, not just for Sara’s sake, but for all gastric cancer patients. We want to be part of the progress and do what we can to advance their treatment.”

To advance the efforts of Fuchs and Bass to develop a living tumor bank for gastric cancers, as well as identify new therapeutic targets in gastric cancer, the Schottensteins established a fund with an initial gift of $100,000.

“We’re so pleased with the Schottensteins’ enthusiastic support of our research program as we make strides to improve treatment options for gastric cancer patients,” said Fuchs, who directs the Gastrointestinal Cancer Center.

UnMask Cancer rocks to raise unrestricted funds

Last October marked the inaugural UnMask Cancer presented by Mandarin Oriental, Boston, an evening of dazzling entertainment and revelry in a hip, urban environment. Masked aerialists swung overhead at District Hall in Boston’s Innovation District, as 275 guests in creative attire danced to the sounds of the Sultans of Swing, sampled craft whiskeys, and dined on oysters and mini-sliders.

The event was conceived as a festive fall fundraiser that would appeal to a younger demographic. Seeing the potential for an innovative Boston benefit, Dana-Farber supporters signed on for leadership roles, among them Scott and Marissa Carmel.

“When we were invited to join the committee, we immediately agreed,” said Scott. “Marissa loves to plan things and I like parties, so it was perfect.” The committee designed the event to attract professionals in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, with the goal of engaging them in Dana-Farber’s mission early in their careers. UnMask Cancer raised almost $200,000 in unrestricted funds, an unqualified success for a first-time event.

“Unrestricted funds are of great value to Dana-Farber,” said Carmel, “because they can be allocated to areas where they are most urgently needed.”

The Carmels and many members of the committee are returning to plan the 2015 event, scheduled for October 24.

UnMask Cancer committee members (left to right): John Resnick, Viki and Richelle Woodworth, Kari Reisner, Dana Paille, Harley Bilzerian, Bob and Beverly Goodell, Meredith Tedford, Michelle and Mark Sobin, Marissa and Scott Carmel, and Adam Keller.

Ellis Reinherz, MD, chief of Dana-Farber’s Laboratory of Immunobiology, is leading promising, novel vaccine research made possible by the Gates Foundation.
Brian Knez’s dual gifts bring joy and support to pediatric cancer patients

E arly last year, Dana-Farber Trustee Brian Knez was listening to the radio when he heard Lisa Scherber, director of Patient and Family Programs in Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic, speak about her work to develop fun and engaging activities and events to support pediatric cancer patients. Intrigued by Scherber’s talk, Knez arranged a meeting with her to learn more about her work and these important programs.

“It only took one meeting before I was hooked,” said Knez. “I was so touched by Lisa’s passion and motivated by this compelling work that I absolutely had to help support it. It was an easy decision.”

After this meeting, Knez was so inspired that he decided to give $150,000 to establish the Knez Family Patient Activities Fund under the direction of Scherber. This fund is helping to support an array of programs and events for youth and young adult patients and their families, including the annual Jimmy Fund Clinic Summer Festival. Each year, pediatric patients, family members, survivors, and staff come together at the festival to enjoy a day filled with fun rides and games. These activities also help to connect patients and families with others going through a similar experience, and ensure that patients are receiving compassionate, comprehensive care—a cornerstone of the Institute’s mission.

“The Grief Family Fund helps transform innovative lung cancer research

In August 2014, Stuart Grief, a non-smoker, was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer. His doctor told him his condition was “serious,” and referred him to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Pasi Jänne, MD, PhD, director of the Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology. Jänne and Dana-Farber fellow Amanda Redig, MD, PhD, became his oncology team.

“My initial experience with Dana-Farber was so welcoming,” said Grief. “I felt like I was part of a community, and Dr. Jänne reassured me that there was hope, with a number of options for genetically targeted therapy.”

After three months in their care, Grief’s scans showed no signs of cancer and he was in remission. As a way to give back to Dana-Farber and to give hope to late-stage lung cancer patients, Stuart and his wife, Amy, established The Grief Family Fund for Innovative Lung Cancer Research with a gift of $100,000 to support Jänne’s research. They also created a Giving Page on MyJimmyFundPage.org that has raised more than $35,000 of additional funds through the generous support of family, friends, and colleagues. In addition, Stuart is registered to ride 163 miles in the Pan-Mass Challenge in August, with all proceeds also going to support Jänne’s research.

“Dana-Farber is truly a unique institution, with the best of faculty and staff,” said Grief. “It’s a resource that we should never take for granted, particularly when government funding for research is being cut.”

“Stuart and Amy’s generosity is an inspiring example of forward-thinking philanthropy in this exciting new era of precision medicine,” said Jänne. “Their support will be crucial in developing next-generation therapies for patients with lung cancer.”

The Grief Family Fund helps transform innovative lung cancer research

“Stuart and Amy’s generosity is an inspiring example of forward-thinking philanthropy in this exciting new era of precision medicine,” said Jänne. “These funds play a critical role in our efforts to ease the burdens on these families and bring joy to their lives during a difficult time.”

Prior to meeting Scherber, Knez was no stranger to Dana-Farber. A supporter for more than two decades and a Trustee since 2003, Knez has also served on many Institute committees and currently chairs the Board of Trustees’ Finance Committee. This multifaceted involvement in the Institute inspired Knez and the Knez Family Charitable Foundation to give $1 million to support Dana-Farber’s Capital Projects Campaign, naming Exam Services in the Jimmy Fund Clinic. This gift is helping the Institute renovate and expand several key laboratory and clinical spaces, keeping Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund at the forefront of cancer discovery science and total patient care.

“Our family felt that it was very important to provide support for the Institute to carry out its key priorities, including making renovations to the Jimmy Fund Clinic,” said Knez. “We were very motivated to help ensure that this clinic is not only providing the finest care, but also that it is a warm and welcoming space for young patients. It’s an honor for the Knez family to be associated with such a wonderful place.”

—Brian Knez, Institute Trustee

Two generous commitments from Institute Trustee Brian Knez are driving key renovations and expansions through the Capital Projects Campaign and supporting fun activities for pediatric patients and their families.

“Stuart and Amy, recently established The Grief Family Fund for Innovative Lung Cancer Research to support the work of Pasi Jänne, MD, PhD.

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6
New grants from Susan G. Komen® strengthen investment in early-career investigators

For more than 30 years, Susan G. Komen® has contributed to many of the advances made in breast cancer care by supporting innovative research. Since its inception in 1982, Susan G. Komen has provided more than $847 million to more than 2,400 researchers worldwide. Komen made its first gift to Dana-Farber in 1995 and since then has provided more than $23 million in support.

In the past year, Komen continued its longstanding relationship with Dana-Farber by awarding new grants totaling more than $1 million. Rachel Freedman, MD, MPH, a physician-scientist at Dana-Farber’s Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers, received a Career Catalyst award of $450,000. The Career Catalyst award is intended to help investigators launch new research endeavors at the start of their career, when it can be challenging to secure funding from other sources like government grants.

“Federal funding for cancer research is declining in real dollars, and the impact has been especially difficult on early-career researchers who are competing for fewer and fewer dollars,” said Judith A. Salerno, MD, MS, president and CEO of Susan G. Komen. “We can’t afford to lose brilliant young investigators like Dr. Freedman, and early-career researchers shouldn’t have to choose between making contributions to cancer research and making a living. That is why Komen invested over half of its 2014 research portfolio in supporting early-career scientists.”

Freedman is studying how adjuvant therapy, additional treatment given after initial care to help lower the risk of cancer recurrence, will impact older women. Treatment decisions for older women with breast cancer can be challenging because there is a limited library of knowledge about treatment selection and toxicity. Many older women do not receive adjuvant therapy, and one reason this may occur is due to concerns about treatment toxicity and overall health.

“The Career Catalyst award from Susan G. Komen has a tremendous impact on my work as an early-career investigator,” said Freedman. “This support will help advance my research to improve how physicians predict toxicity in older women with breast cancer, which is an important topic for this population of patients.”

Freedman’s study will evaluate recurrence and survival, but also patient-reported outcomes and how biomarkers of aging may correlate with treatment toxicity. Results of this work may have an immediate impact on the care of older women with breast cancer and help direct future interventions.

In addition to Freedman, Komen also provided grants to Dana-Farber investigators Ji Li, PhD, Otto Merger Filho, MD, and Shaokun Shu, PhD. Dana-Farber researchers also serve as Komen Scholars and scientific advisory board members, including Judy Garber, MD, director of the Center for Cancer Genetics and Prevention; Ian Krop, MD, PhD; David Livingston, MD, deputy director of the Dana-Farber/ Harvard Cancer Center; Ann Partridge, MD, founder and director of the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer; and Eric Winer, MD, chief of the Division of Women’s Cancers.

Team Jack Foundation scores generous funding for pediatric brain tumor research

In 2013, 8-year-old pediatric brain tumor patient Jack Hoffman won the hearts of millions when he ran for a touchdown during a Nebraska Huskers football game. As a way to give back for the overwhelming support for pediatric brain tumor research that flowed in following the game, Brianna and Andy Hoffman continued to build on the Team Jack Foundation, which had been formed just a few months before Jack’s run. Recently, the foundation awarded a $300,000 grant to Dana-Farber’s Director of Pediatric Medical Neuro-Oncology Mark Kieran, MD, PhD, for his Phase I/II study of MEK162 in children with progressive or recurrent low-grade gliomas.

“The Team Jack Foundation is proud to support the world-leading research efforts of Dr. Mark Kieran in the area of pediatric brain cancer,” said Andy Hoffman, chairman of the Team Jack Foundation. “Thanks to his team at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, children battling brain tumors have tangible hope that a cure is within reach.”

Kieran and his team have made significant progress in clinical trials for pediatric low-grade gliomas over the last seven years.

“We and others have identified the major mutations that drive pediatric low-grade gliomas, the most common brain tumor in children,” said Kieran. “We have identified a drug that in pre-clinical experiments was able to significantly reduce the signaling of the mutation responsible for the majority of these tumors. This targeted therapy avoids the radiation or chemotherapy that is typical of the standard therapy for this disease.”

Team Jack Foundation, in partnership with the Team Jack Foundation, awarded a $300,000 grant to Dana-Farber to fund clinical trials for a new drug that can help advance research to improve how physicians predict toxicity in older women with breast cancer, which is an important topic for this population of patients.”

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In addition to Freedman, Komen also provided grants to Dana-Farber investigators Ji Li, PhD, Otto Merger Filho, MD, and Shaokun Shu, PhD. Dana-Farber researchers also serve as Komen Scholars and scientific advisory board members, including Judy Garber, MD, director of the Center for Cancer Genetics and Prevention; Ian Krop, MD, PhD; David Livingston, MD, deputy director of the Dana-Farber/ Harvard Cancer Center; Ann Partridge, MD, founder and director of the Program for Young Women with Breast Cancer; and Eric Winer, MD, chief of the Division of Women’s Cancers.

Team Jack Foundation scores generous funding for pediatric brain tumor research

On June 4, the Dana-Farber Society marked its milestone 25th anniversary with a celebratory recognition dinner at the Mandarin Oriental, Boston. The Society, recognizing those who have made provisions for Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund in their estate plans, began as a group of 90 forward-thinking donors in 1990. Now a community of nearly 900 committed members, the Society commemorated a quarter-century of ensuring the future of Dana-Farber’s lifesaving mission. The evening’s featured speaker was the Honorable Stephen G. Breyer, associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States and Dana-Farber Trustee, pictured above (left) with Dana-Farber Society Co-Chairs and fellow Trustees Barbara and Jim Sadowky.

“Dana-Farber Society members are committed to the past, present, and future of Dana-Farber, and will continue to support incredible progress in the fight against cancer for years to come,” said Jim.

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Asia-Pacific Cancer Research Fund 亚太肿瘤研究基金会 advances Chinese medicine and integrative oncology therapies at Dana-Farber

Xitang Ying, chairman of the Asia-Pacific Cancer Research Fund (APCRF), was impressed by the calmness that surrounded him in the Yawkey Center for Cancer Care on a recent visit to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, a stark contrast to the hospitals in China, where he has seen firsthand facilities that are over capacity, with doctors often seeing more than 100 patients in a day.

Ying is a chemist by training, but it is his personal connection to cancer that has inspired him to make a tremendous $1 million gift through the APCRF, of which $590,000 will establish the Chinese Medicine Research Initiative at Dana-Farber, and $50,000 will support the Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies through the Capital Projects Campaign. This is the first gift ever made through Ying’s organization.

The APCRF’s gift will promote and support basic and clinical cancer research that focuses on the integration of Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine, including oncology acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and cancer nutrition. These are the same principles that Ying’s foundation, based in Hong Kong, upholds.

“I want to encourage innovative research efforts in traditional Chinese medicine, develop more effective integrative treatments for cancer patients, and promote the collaborations that will help to move this field forward, legitimizing integrative medicine through research,” said Ying. “In supporting the Zakim Center at Dana-Farber, I hope that this gift will create a mutually beneficial learning opportunity.”

Ying’s family is rooted in traditional Chinese medicine, which his father practiced in the rural village from which Ying hails. Within the past few years, Ying lost three family members to cancer. Watching them suffer throughout their treatment, he became determined to improve follow-up care and treatment in China, and sought a way to incorporate Eastern medicine to treat the whole patient.

“The APCRF’s gift will enable Dana-Farber to foster academic exchange between China and the United States, and will help us to further develop our Chinese medicine program, acupuncture, and herbal medicine,” said Weidong Lu, MB, MPH, PhD, staff acupuncturist at the Zakim Center. “Cancer patients will benefit from this gift—not just at the Zakim Center, but patients all over the world.”

It is thanks to Lu’s friendship with Ying, forged over conversations and shared interests following research presentations Lu gave while visiting China, that Ying came to direct his foundation’s support to the Zakim Center.

On February 12, Ying was welcomed again to Dana-Farber. The occasion was marked by a formal signing ceremony of the gift terms and was attended by Edward J. Benz Jr., MD, president and CEO of Dana-Farber; Jennifer Ligibel, MD, director of the Zakim Center; and Edward J. Benz Jr., MD, president and CEO of Dana-Farber.

“InsupportingtheZakimCenteratDana-Farber,I hope that this gift will create a mutually beneficial learning opportunity.”

—Xitang Ying, chairman of the Asia-Pacific Cancer Research Fund

GBL Foundation makes gift to lift pediatric patients’ spirits during the rough times

A longtime Dana-Farber supporter, GBL Foundation, Inc., recently increased its commitment to the Institute by establishing the GBL Foundation Fund with a $100,000 gift to the Pediatric Patient Activities Program under the direction of Lisa Scherber, director of Patient and Family Programs in Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic.

In a place where inspiring stories abound, GBL Foundation President Michelle Labossiere discovered her inspiration while accompanying her mother, Judy Brunaccini, to colon and then breast cancer treatment appointments at Dana-Farber.

“We used to walk by the ironworkers spray painting pediatric patient names on steel beams,” said Labossiere. “It was a big motivator for me, my mom, and my child.”

Inspired, too, was Labossiere’s daughter Lexi, a high school junior who is active in the foundation’s charitable decision-making. She recently toured Dana-Farber with her mother and some friends—a trip that solidified her dream to work in the medical field and made her proud of what the foundation is helping to achieve.

“Our goal is to make the kids happy while they’re going through rough times, to take them away from it,” said Michelle Labossiere. “It was something my whole family appreciated, being able to get away for a while.”

“This incredibly generous gift allows our team to provide a different kind of medicine to our patients and families in the Jimmy Fund Clinic,” said Scherber. “From large events to parties within the Clinic, we will be able to provide smiles, joy, and memories to so many special children.”

GBL Foundation President Michelle Labossiere (second from left) is inspired to give to Dana-Farber by her mother and cancer survivor Judy Brunaccini (left), her husband, Rob, and her daughter, Lexi.
Miller family funds breakthrough discoveries in Hodgkin lymphoma research

When Douglas Miller's Hodgkin lymphoma relapsed more than 10 years ago, little research was being conducted on this relatively rare form of lymphoma. Since then, through the generous support of his father, Marlin, and his family, research led by Margaret Shipp, MD, chief of the Division of Hematologic Neoplasia and director of the Lymphoma Program at Dana-Farber, has resulted in breakthrough treatments that increase the ability of the immune system to kill Hodgkin lymphoma cells.

In previous studies supported by the Miller family, Shipp was one of the first scientists to identify Galectin-1 as a protein used by Hodgkin lymphoma cells to evade the immune system. She also identified a genetic mutation responsible for the excessive production of the PD-L1 protein, which interacts with another protein, PD-1, to shut off the disease-fighting activities of the immune system. The same genetic alteration also increases the expression and activity of JAK2, which boosts the expression of PD-L1. This genetic alteration is one of the defining features of Hodgkin lymphoma.

“It has been wonderful to watch Dr. Shipp’s progress over the years. We are going to continue with her down this track to gain a greater understanding of the disease.”

—Marlin Miller

Now, Shipp and Philippe Armand, MD, PhD, have demonstrated that nivolumab, a PD-1-blocking antibody, disrupts the PD-1/PD-L1 interaction, enabling the immune system to attack cancer cells and drive Hodgkin lymphoma into remission. This tremendous discovery provides some of the first evidence of the potential of immunotherapies to treat this intractable disease.

“The Miller family’s support has enabled us to better understand the underlying biology of Hodgkin lymphoma and its relationship to the immune system, and to pursue rational targeted treatments for this disease,” said Shipp. “We are extremely grateful for their investment in our research and their partnership in this work.”

“It has been wonderful to watch Dr. Shipp’s progress over the years,” said Miller, whose son, Douglas, died in 2004. “We’re going to continue with her down this track to gain a greater understanding of the disease.”

Damon Runyon Foundation strengthens commitment to Dana-Farber

The Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation continues to generously support the groundbreaking research of Dana-Farber’s physicians-scientists who seek to provide not only alternative treatments for patients, but the hope for a better quality of life. The foundation recently awarded grants totaling $866,000 to Peter Hammerman, MD, PhD, Mark Zimmerman, PhD, and Dennis Buckley, PhD.

Working with his mentors Glenn Dranoff, MD; Stephen F. Hodi, MD, director of Dana-Farber’s Center for Immunotherapy; and Kwok-Kin Wong, MD, PhD, co-scientific director of the Belfer Center for Applied Cancer Sciences, Hammerman will explore the complicated relationship between the tumor and its immune microenvironment in lung cancer to develop personalized cancer immunotherapy.

“This project is about how we can bring precision medicine approaches to immunotherapy,” said Hammerman. “Damon Runyon has been instrumental in providing the support needed to help better understand patient genetics and predictive biomarkers.”

Zimmerman’s research focuses on CHD5, a gene often associated with poor prognosis for neuroblastoma, a tumor of the peripheral sympathetic nervous system that accounts for 15 percent of all childhood cancer deaths. Along with his mentor, A. Thomas Look, MD, Zimmerman hopes to advance understanding of how this gene can function as a tumor suppressor and lead to improved treatments for young patients.

“This four-year fellowship allows more time for me to focus on research, rather than searching for funding,” said Zimmerman. “For that, I am grateful to Damon Runyon.”

Buckley, working with James Bradner, MD, aims to chemically generate new molecules to improve treatments. Through his research, Buckley will develop improved inhibitors of BET-bromodomain proteins for treatment of multiple cancers, including leukemia and solid tumors. “As a research chemist, I was honored to earn the fellowship—not only is it prestigious, but invaluable to my work and research,” said Buckley.

“Damon Runyon selected these investigators for their dedication to innovative research fighting all cancers,” said Lorraine W. Egan, president and CEO of the Damon Runyon Cancer Research Foundation. “We look forward to witnessing the impact of their endeavors.”

Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walkers recognized for going the extra mile

The annual Extra Mile Brunch, held March 15 at the Boston Marriott Copley Place, welcomed more than 420 participants and guests from the 2014 Boston Marathon® Jimmy Fund Walk presented by Hyundai. The tremendous success of the 2014 walk was celebrated with Pacesetters, who raised $1,500 or more ($500 or more for children under 12); Captains and Co-Captains of teams that raised $10,000 or more; Walk sponsors, Volunteer Site Captains, and Walk Heroes.

Five walkers were honored after having been nominated by their peers for having “gone the Extra Mile” (from left): First-Time Walker of the Year George Poulakopoulos, Alumni Walker of the Year Devann Murphy, First-Time Team Captain of the Year Tara Shuman, Volunteer of the Year Andres Tejeda, and Alumni Team Captain of the Year and Institute Trustee Peggy Grodd (not pictured). Lifetime fundraising milestone awards were presented to Zach Galvin (second from right) for his team “Zach’s Pack,” which surpassed $500,000 in lifetime fundraising, and Janet Schwartz, who surpassed $250,000 in individual lifetime fundraising.
The 24th Annual Discovery Celebration in Palm Beach, Fla., raised more than $1.5 million for Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and the Jimmy Fund, bringing the Palm Beach community’s gala cumulative total to more than $30 million.

Every year, philanthropists from South Florida and New England come together in Palm Beach for the annual Discovery Celebration season—a schedule of exciting events that benefit Dana-Farber’s cutting-edge cancer research and compassionate patient care.

This year’s season kicked off on Jan. 21 with a dazzling runway fashion presentation of Naeem Khan’s Spring 2015 collection and a personal appearance by the designer, followed by dinner. The Kick-Off Party, hosted by Institute Trustee Phyllis Krock, Tom Quick, and Peter Schuette, general manager of Saks Fifth Avenue Palm Beach, set the tone for a festive season.

On Feb. 18 at the sophisticated restaurant Table 26, the Discovery Celebration weekend opened with an intimate Pre-Celebration Dinner with Dana-Farber physician-scientists hosted by Judy and Jim Harpel, Sheila Palandjian, and Institute Trustee Jean Sharf and her husband, Fred.

The next morning, Institute Trustee Robert Belfer and his wife, Renée, and Institute Trustee Judie Schlager and her husband, Larry, hosted the 14th Annual Breakfast with the Doctors symposium at the Palm Beach Country Club. A panel of six physicians, moderated by Institute President and CEO Edward J. Benz Jr., MD, presented recent Dana-Farber research breakthroughs to more than 150 guests.

On Friday evening, nearly 400 guests enjoyed the 24th Annual Discovery Celebration, an elegant evening of dinner, excitement, and entertainment at the Mar-a-Lago Club. The night featured a dynamic concert by three talented performers from the hit NBC Emmy Award-winning show, “The Voice”—soulful artist Will Champlin, vocal powerhouse Sisaundra Lewis, and gifted crooner Matthew Schuler. The evening also included dancing to the music of Veronica Martell Entertainment.

Vicki and Arthur Loring chaired and coordinated this year’s lively and successful Discovery Celebration. The event was also made possible by Vice Chairs and Grand Benefactors Michele Kessler, an Institute Trustee, and her husband, Howard, and Phyllis and Paul Fireman. Patrick Park was the evening’s Grand Patron Chair.

“We are grateful for the Palm Beach community’s steadfast commitment to our mission to conquer cancer,” said Benz. “Thanks to this exceptional group of philanthropists, Dana-Farber can continue to make great progress in the fight against cancer—from discovering new, targeted treatments in the labs, to delivering compassionate care to every patient who walks through our doors.”

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Palm Beach cumulative giving surpasses $30 million

Support Dana-Farber through the game you love at JimmyFundGolf.org
Prostate Cancer Foundation commits $2 million to collaborative research

Clinical research is essential to finding treatments that lead to better patient care. In 2014, the Prostate Cancer Foundation (PCF) issued Challenge Awards to support transformational prostate cancer research at Dana-Farber. Mary-Ellen Taplin, MD, director of clinical research at Dana-Farber's Lank Center for Genitourinary Oncology, and Matthew Freedman, MD, are leading teams that each received $1 million PCF Challenge Awards for their research. Challenge Awards were created to assist teams of investigators in strategic areas, and support a major PCF goal to drive transformational research for recurrent or advanced prostate cancer. By funding these teams, PCF strongly encourages researchers to not only apply novel biotechniques, but also integrate new, “first-in-field” research expertise to challenge in prostate cancer basic or translational research.

Freedman's project, “Defining the Epigenetic Landscape in Human Prostate Cancer,” was a Movember-PCF Challenge-Award recipient. Prostate cancer does not have a large number of genetic mutations; therefore, changes in the factors that aberrantly switch genes on and off may play an important role in disease development. Leading a team of investigators at Dana-Farber, Freedman will research hormones—specifically androgen receptors, the primary driver of prostate cancer—to learn more about how they interact with DNA. The ultimate goal is to home in on better, more effective therapies and predictive biomarkers for patients undergoing treatment.

Taplin also received $1 million for her project entitled "Eradicating Lethal Micrometastatic Prostate Cancer Through High Intensity Short Course AR Suppression." Over the course of two years, Taplin and her team will investigate ways to treat tumors that are too small to detect through normal processes. As part of a phase II clinical trial for men with high-risk, localized prostate cancer, Taplin and her team of young investigators will develop novel therapies. With the goal to understand the biology of resistance and resistance, the scope of work includes studying bone marrow as part of molecular studies.

"The PCF has been instrumental in supporting the science, and we think that the science from these trials will support the development of a larger national—or international—trial where we can successfully treat more patients," said Taplin, who has worked on research funded by PCF in the past. “Every trial correlates to the next trial, and without the PCF, we wouldn't be able to take the necessary next steps.”

“In the United States, prostate cancer affects 1 in 7 men, making it the most common non-skin cancer in America,” said Howard Soule, PhD, chief science officer and executive vice president, Prostate Cancer Foundation. “We are confident that our funding to Drs. Freedman and Taplin will result in improved care for all prostate cancer patients—especially those with the worst forms of this disease.”

Dallai gift honors the legacy of a beloved wife and mother

Anna Dallai faced small cell lung cancer with characteristic strength and courage. Small cell lung cancer often spreads quickly, and treatment options are limited. In spite of this, Anna continued to apply her sophisticated sense of fashion to Riccardi's, the high-end clothing boutique she built with her husband of 36 years, Riccardo. She also dedicated herself to remaining strong enough to dance with her son, Riccardo Jr., at his wedding.

“She persevered through the treatments so she could be there at the wedding, and she accomplished what she set out to do,” said Riccardo Dallai. “It was devastating to know there is no cure for small cell lung cancer, but there was no doubt we would get her care at Dana-Farber. Everyone is special at Dana-Farber,” he added. “Everyone, regardless of their walk of life, gets the same excellent care, and everyone gets special attention.”

To honor the memory of her wife, who passed away in July 2014, Riccardo Dallai established a $250,000 endowed fund to advance small cell lung cancer research in perpetuity at the Carole M. and Philip L. Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology. Lowe Center physician-scientist David Jackman, MD, cared for Anna alongside Dana-Farber fellow Sameer Chopra, MD, PhD, and shared a special bond with the Dallai family.

“Riccardo's generous contribution is a testament to the generosity of the Dallai family and Anna's memory,” said Jackman. “This gift will help Dana-Farber investigators increase our understanding of this disease in our ongoing efforts to develop more effective treatments.”

CureSearch for Children’s Cancer supports young investigators at Dana-Farber

CureSearch for Children’s Cancer is a national foundation that accelerates cures for pediatric cancers by driving innovation, eliminating research barriers, and solving the field’s most challenging problems. Recently, CureSearch awarded their Young Investigator Program grant, which goes to promising, early-stage research scientists, to Andrew Hong, MD, and Birgit Knoechel, MD, PhD, of Dana-Farber's Department of Pediatric Oncology.

“This support is crucial at a time when funding for early career investigators is limited, especially in pediatric cancers,” said Hong.

“The CureSearch grant will provide the critical, protected time and research resources for further investigations that can ultimately translate into innovative clinical trials for children with cancer,” added Knoechel.

The Young Investigator Program grant will enable Hong to look for new ways to treat patients with Wilms tumor who have a higher risk of cancer relapse, which can lead to poorer outcomes. Also, this grant will allow Knoechel to investigate epigenetic vulnerabilities of drug resistant cells in T-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia (T-ALL).

“Our mission is to end children’s cancer by driving innovative and targeted research with measurable results,” said Laura Thrall, chief executive officer of CureSearch. “We are investing in the future of cancer research while helping these investigators in their quest to become independent researchers.”

—Laura Thrall, chief executive officer of CureSearch for Children’s Cancer

We are investing in the future of cancer research while helping these investigators in their quest to become independent researchers.”

10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission.
Impact SUMMER 2015

Fellowship Program endowed fund recognizes Robert Mayer’s leadership, legacy

Robert Mayer, MD, (center) with trainees from his 1986 fellowship class (left to right): James DeCaprio, MD, Dana-Farber; Michael Caligiuri, MD, CEO of the James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute, and director of the Ohio State University Comprehensive Cancer Center; Myles Brown, MD, director of the Center for Functional Cancer Epigenetics, Dana-Farber; Robert Soiffer, MD, vice chair of the Department of Medical Oncology, chief of the Division of Hematologic Malignancies, and co-chief of the Department of Stem Cell Transplantation, Dana-Farber; George Demetri, MD, director of the Center for Sarcoma and Bone Oncology and senior vice president for Experimental Therapeutics, Dana-Farber; and Leonard Zon, MD, Dana-Farber; at the February 27 celebration in Mayer’s honor.

Robert J. “Bob” Mayer, MD, has been dedicated to providing extraordinary training to oncology fellows for more than 36 years. Under his direction, the Fellowship Program at Dana-Farber rapidly ascended to become the premier oncology training program, and continues to attract the brightest stars aspiring to careers in cancer medicine. In tribute to Mayer’s steadfast commitment to developing future generations of medical oncologists, Institute President and CEO Edward J. Benz Jr., MD, and Chair of Medical Oncology James Griffin, MD, spurred the creation of an endowed fund that will provide a permanent source of funding for the Fellowship Program director. Generous leadership gifts from longtime Dana-Farber donors have set the pace for more than 160 others including former fellows, trustees, supporters, and fans to raise more than $700,000 thus far for the fund.

“I believe the greatest achievement of my career is having had the opportunity to participate in the training of so many young physicians who have become leaders in the field,” said Mayer, currently faculty vice president for Academic Affairs.

Between 1975 and 2011, more than 350 trainees benefited from educational development through the Fellowship Program with Mayer at the helm. Many later went on to hold major leadership roles in the Boston area, across the nation, and abroad, at top cancer centers, academic departments, and in industry. “Dr. Mayer remains completely dedicated to the development of young physicians,” said Ann LaCasse, MD, who succeeded Mayer as director of the Dana-Farber Fellowship Program. “It has been a privilege to assume his role in the program, and his support and guidance has been invaluable. He continues to selﬁes devote time and effort to further the academic potential of junior faculty.”

A celebration of Mayer’s leadership legacy was held on February 27 and attended by nearly 400 guests, reuniting former fellows among Mayer’s colleagues, family, and friends.

The legacy of a man of action with a big heart

Bernard “Bernie” McGarry Jr. was larger-than-life, a baseball fan with an incredible memory for numbers, a charismatic storyteller, and a generous friend. Early in his career, McGarry moved to Texas, where he founded and directed several successful businesses, while making sure to give back to those in need within his Texas community.

In one characteristic example, McGarry partnered with the owners of a local restaurant to host Christmas parties for children in need and provide them with items of clothing, shoes, and toys. “That’s just the way Bernie was,” said Carolyn Ray, McGarry’s girlfriend. “He was a man of action, a tough businessman—and a successful one. And if you were a friend, he would defend you, and be true to you his entire life.”

Though he spent most of his life in Texas, McGarry carried a deep respect for Boston as a center for medical discovery and care. “Bernie had a soft spot for Boston hospitals,” said Leo Barry, one of McGarry’s longtime Boston friends. Over the years, McGarry lost many of those close friends to cancer, among them his best friend from college. To honor their struggles and to contribute to finding better treatments, McGarry bequeathed a generous portion of his estate to Dana-Farber.

McGarry’s compassionate, unrestricted gift is a telling reflection of his powerful personality, on the one hand driving action against cancer by fueling early research, and on the other, supporting critically important care programs that help patients and families when they need it most.

“We deeply appreciate Bernie’s generosity and foresight in making this gift,” said Edward J. Benz Jr., MD, president and CEO of Dana-Farber. “The extraordinary support that we receive from people like Bernie drives the groundbreaking advances that we are making across the Institute right now and builds a strong foundation for our work moving forward.”

Jimmy Fund Clinic welcomes Jimmy’s Junction

This spring, the Jimmy Fund Clinic welcomed Jimmy’s Junction—a new, uniquely lit display featuring animated performances by 51 cartoon characters. Equipped with motion tracking, these Jimmy Fund “Friends” accompany pediatric patients and their families as they travel past the wall, creating a comforting, positive atmosphere that helps ease the transition from the waiting room to the clinic. Jimmy’s Junction is part of the clinic’s recent redesign, which includes a bright, open waiting area and renovated, expanded clinical infusion space. The newly revitalized Jimmy Fund Clinic further establishes Dana-Farber as a place of hope and healing, delivering world-class pediatric cancer care in a cheerful setting that encourages kids to be kids.

Jimmy’s Junction was created by Small Design Firm, in collaboration with artist/writer Brien Bataclan and animator Chris Stacy. More than $275,000 was raised through the Jimmy Fund Clinic through the opening of the new Jimmy Fund Clinic space and this display.

CONQUER CANCER THROUGH GOLF

JimmyFundGolf.org

SUPPORT THE JIMMY FUND

Bernard “Bernie” McGarry was a man of action who was motivated by deep compassion for those in need. To act against cancer and to support patients and families during stressful times, McGarry made a generous, unrestricted bequest to Dana-Farber.
Donor supports targeted, underfunded lung cancer research

S
horribly before he was diagnosed with small cell lung cancer, Steve Schaubert learned that one of his daughters was expecting twins. In his first meeting with his Dana-Farber oncologist, Peter Hammerman, MD, PhD, Schaubert told him, “You have to keep me alive to see my grandkids.”

An “intense but necessary” treatment regimen left Schaubert with a clean bill of health and a thirst for more knowledge on the subject of cancer. What he learned about developments in targeted therapies and the relative underfunding of lung cancer research inspired Schaubert to create the Stephen J. Schaubert Family Lung Cancer Research Fund at Dana-Farber with a $100,000 gift.

Under the direction of Hammerman, a medical oncologist and translational investigator in the Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology at Dana-Farber, these funds will support research into the use of novel agents to specifically target cancer cell populations that persist following treatments with targeted therapies. “Eventually, it will be doctors like Peter who will figure out what stops these rogue genes from growing, or how to kill them in a more targeted way with fewer side effects,” said Schaubert.

In addition to his gift, Schaubert named a gene for Hammerman in Dana-Farber’s Gene Display and signed it from his now 2-and-a-half-year-old twin grandchildren, Clara and Liam, whom he may not have met without Hammerman’s exceptional care.

In addition to his $100,000 gift, Steve Schaubert named a gene in Dana-Farber’s Gene Display for his physician, Peter Hammerman, MD, PhD, and signed it from his grandchildren.

Capital Projects Campaign donors celebrate the opening of the expanded Jimmy Fund Clinic

The expansion of Dana-Farber’s Jimmy Fund Clinic, one of the central goals of the Capital Projects Campaign, was celebrated May 12 with a ceremonial “opening” event. Designed with significant input from caregivers and patients, the new Clinic provides state-of-the-art support for Dana-Farber’s dual mission of delivering world-class care while meeting the unique needs of pediatric patients and their families. The expanded Clinic is 40 percent larger, with age-appropriate spaces for patients and their families to play and socialize before and during treatment, as well as private spaces for consultations. Another major focus of the expansion was the co-location of pediatric oncology offices adjacent to the new Clinic, to stimulate collaboration among faculty and streamline access to care for families. At the May 12 celebration, donors and their guests toured the new facility and heard about the impact of their gifts from Lisa Diller, MD, Dana-Farber chief medical officer for Pediatric Oncology; Lisa Scherber, director of Patient and Family Programs (a.k.a. “the Play Lady”); and Jimmy Fund Clinic patient Maria Splaine, who said, “It’s your commitment and generosity that allow kids like me to survive, get better, and move on with our lives. From the bottom of my heart, I thank you.”

Institute Trustee Alison Pronu Jaffe, her husband, Daniel Jaffe, and their family named a Care and Activity Zone to engage and comfort pediatric patients during treatment.

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) of Eastern New England Board President Paula Wright (with scissors) prepared to cut the ribbon on the RMHC’s Care and Activity Zone, with (from left) Grant Committee Chairman Al Bennett and his wife, Jane, and Executive Director Karen McEachern.

Institute Trustee Betty Ann Blum visited the Pediatric Resource Room (above) and Snack Bar which she named with her sister, Marjorie, to ease the stress of treatment for Jimmy Fund Clinic patients and their families.

Institute Trustee Alison Pronu Jaffe, her husband, Daniel Jaffe, and their family named a Care and Activity Zone to engage and comfort pediatric patients during treatment.

HomeGoods Vice President, Marketing, Emily Trent and Executive Vice President, Merchandising, Herb Landshahn (first and second from right) were joined by HomeGoods field leadership from across the country to open the HomeGoods Infusion Area in the Jimmy Fund Clinic.

Institute Trustee Betty Ann Blum visited the Pediatric Resource Room (above) and Snack Bar which she named with her sister, Marjorie, to ease the stress of treatment for Jimmy Fund Clinic patients and their families.

Ado and Connie Pitt named this vitals bay in the Jimmy Fund Clinic, an important first stop on treatment days for pediatric patients.

In addition to his $100,000 gift, Steve Schaubert named a gene in Dana-Farber’s Gene Display for his physician, Peter Hammerman, MD, PhD, and signed it from his grandchildren.


10% of all designated gifts support our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission.
VanDernoot family’s generous pledge to overcome cancer

Polly and Richard VanDernoot and their family have been supporters of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute for many years. Their involvement, along with that of their children, Josh and Kathleen VanDernoot, and Nicole and Jared Hirsch, has assisted the Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Chef’s Cooking for Hope and numerous fundraising events in Boston and in Palm Beach.

In 2014, after making a generous pledge to Dana-Farber, the unthinkable happened: Polly was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Eric Winer, MD, chief of the Division of Women’s Cancers and director of the Breast Oncology Program in the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers, first saw Polly for a consultation. Upon diagnosis, she was quickly connected with Ann LaCasce, MD, Dana-Farber hematologic oncologist and director of the Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare Hematology/Oncology Fellowship Program. “Throughout my chemotherapy, the support and compassion from the Dana-Farber staff was unbelievable,” said VanDernoot. “My most important medical support was unquestionably my doctor, Ann LaCasce. She healed me in many ways, from her warm, caring smile, to a perfect protocol. Dana-Farber is staffed with skilled people who really care, and I experienced this firsthand. We are so fortunate to have a medical facility of this magnitude in Boston. It is a very special place. Thank you all!”

The VanDernoot family’s thoughtful pledge helps to support LaCasce’s and Winer’s research efforts at Dana-Farber.

Paying back her “dream team”

Since her 2001 stem cell transplant for chronic lymphocytic leukemia, Nancy Eskandarian has turned to her “dream team” of physicians and nurses at Dana-Farber to treat a serious transplant-related complication called graft-versus-host disease (GVHD). With a recent $100,000 gift, Nancy and her husband, Institute Trustee Edward Eskandarian, have created the Eskandarian Fund for Stem Cell Research to support GVHD studies under the direction of Joseph Antin, MD, chief of the Stem Cell Transplantation Program.

Up to 50 percent of patients who receive an allogeneic transplant (a transplant of cells from a closely matched donor) develop some form of GVHD, in which the donor’s transplanted immune cells attack the patient’s healthy cells and cause a cascade of symptoms. Antin’s research focuses on novel regimens to control or prevent GVHD through both cellular engineering and the application of new immunosuppressant drugs. “Graft-versus-host disease remains one of the major barriers to improving outcomes after stem cell transplantation,” said Antin. “The Eskandarians’ gift provides valuable resources to help fuel our investigations in chronic GVHD and enable us to develop new strategies to arrest or prevent it.”

As longtime members of the Aesclepius Society, the Eskandarians are passionate advocates of Dana-Farber. “It is essential to support Dana-Farber scientists like Dr. Antin,” said Nancy Eskandarian, “because more knowledge is needed to empower them to keep making discoveries about T cells and B cells and graft-versus-host disease.” Our gift is just paying that forward.”

The VanDernoot family’s pledge to Dana-Farber

“Dana-Farber is staffed with skilled people who really care, and I experienced this firsthand. We are so fortunate to have a medical facility of this magnitude in Boston.”
—Polly VanDernoot

Chefs for Jimmy celebrates 25th year

The Chefs for Jimmy 25th Anniversary Red Carpet Celebration, presented by the Winer Levsky Group of UBS Financial Services Inc., brought the glamour of Hollywood to Agawam, Mass., on Jan. 23. More than 1,100 attendees walked the red carpet and sampled gourmet cuisine prepared by 29 of western Massachusetts’ best restaurants and caterers. Held in memory of Neal Webber, a longtime supporter of the Jimmy Fund, the event raised more than $100,000 for Dana-Farber. Hosted by the Jimmy Fund Council of Western Massachusetts and co-chaired by Institute Trustee Barbara Sadovsky, Chefs for Jimmy has spread the word about Dana-Farber’s mission to conquer cancer to western Massachusetts and raised more than $1.4 million in unrestricted funding since its inaugural event in 1990. Pictured above: restaurant owner and event sponsor Joe Leone (center) and staff members from Leone’s Restaurant show off one of their Hollywood-inspired dishes.

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—Nancy Eskandarian

Institute Trustee Edward Eskandarian and his wife, Nancy, created a fund to support research by Joseph Antin, MD, into graft-versus-host disease, one of the major complications of stem cell transplantation.

QVC and FFANY continue to take steps in the fight against breast cancer

The Fashion Footwear Association of New York (FFANY), QVC, Inc., and the Fashion Footwear Charitable Foundation (FFCF) joined forces Oct. 8 at New York’s Waldorf Astoria to host the 21st annual QVC Presents “FFANY Shoes on Sale,” a gala and shoe sale benefiting breast cancer research and education at nine renowned cancer institutions, including Dana-Farber.

The evening’s speaking program featured a presentation of the FFANY Jodi Fisher Humanitarian Award to Joseph C. Moore, president and CEO of FFANY, for his lifelong commitment and dedication to the footwear industry. In addition, the QVC Presents “FFANY Shoes on Sale” broadcast featured more than 80 brands offered at half the manufacturer’s suggested retail price*. The event generated $355,000 for the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers at Dana-Farber.

Since its inception, QVC Presents “FFANY Shoes on Sale” has sold more than 1.7 million pairs of shoes and generated more than $47 million to benefit leading breast cancer research and education institutions. Of that, more than $6 million has been generated for the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers at Dana-Farber.

“We are extremely grateful for the generous support that QVC and FFANY have provided for our clinical and research programs within the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers,” said Erica Mayer, MD, senior physician in Breast Oncology at the Susan F. Smith Center. “For two decades their contributions have significantly advanced our research goals and directly improved the quality of care we are able to provide for patients with breast cancer.”

*The manufacturer’s suggested retail price is based on supplier’s representation of value. No sales tax has been added at the price.

VanDernoot family’s generous pledge to overcome cancer

Polly and Richard VanDernoot and their family have been supporters of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute for many years. Their involvement, along with that of their children, Josh and Kathleen VanDernoot, and Nicole and Jared Hirsch, has assisted the Friends of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute’s Chef’s Cooking for Hope and numerous fundraising events in Boston and in Palm Beach.

In 2014, after making a generous pledge to Dana-Farber, the unthinkable happened: Polly was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin lymphoma.

Eric Winer, MD, chief of the Division of Women’s Cancers and director of the Breast Oncology Program in the Susan F. Smith Center for Women’s Cancers, first saw Polly for a consultation. Upon diagnosis, she was quickly connected with Ann LaCasce, MD, Dana-Farber hematologic oncologist and director of the Dana-Farber/Partners CancerCare Hematology/Oncology Fellowship Program. “Throughout my chemotherapy, the support and compassion from the Dana-Farber staff was unbelievable,” said VanDernoot. “My most important medical support was unquestionably my doctor, Ann LaCasce. She healed me in many ways, from her warm, caring smile, to a perfect protocol. Dana-Farber is staffed with skilled people who really care, and I experienced this firsthand. We are so fortunate to have a medical facility of this magnitude in Boston. It is a very special place. Thank you all!”

The VanDernoot family’s thoughtful pledge helps to support LaCasce’s and Winer’s research efforts at Dana-Farber.

Paying back her “dream team”

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Nurse’s gift of real estate recognizes exemplary care and research

As a nurse practitioner and passionate patient advocate, Judy Murray, RN, MSN, NP, spent much of her career helping others get the care they needed. She was inquisitive, committed, and tireless in seeking the highest standard of health care possible—whether it was through her job or for family and friends.

Judy was not easily swayed by reputation alone. While she knew of Dana-Farber’s world-renowned status, as a patient she sought to validate it. Judy’s research confirmed she was receiving the best possible treatment; the wonderful, unexpected bonus was the comforting, personal care she received from her team, especially oncologist Beth Overmoyer, MD, and oncology clinical specialist Michael Comeau, RN, MSN, CPON.

“Dana-Farber’s combination of cutting-edge treatment coupled equally with personal care and a gentle touch significantly impacted our family’s experience,” said Doris Sinkevich, one of Judy’s sisters.

Sadly, a cure did not come in time for Judy, but she thoughtfully left a generous gift of real estate to Dana-Farber in her estate plans. The proceeds from the sale of her property will further the groundbreaking research and patient care that she so greatly admired.

“Judy wanted to continue the legacy of the outstanding and personalized care that she received,” said Doris. “She truly believed that her gift could enable and support the ongoing research that will help ultimately win the battle against cancer.”

Judy’s compassionate and generous gift will further both Dana-Farber’s mission, and her legacy as a tireless patient advocate.

Cure AT/RT Now: A tribute to Avalanna with message of hope

A 6-year-old cancer patient, Avalanna Routh expressed a joie de vivre that brought a smile to everyone around her.

“Avalanna was a special girl who inspired in each and every person she met a passion to beat this cancer,” said Charles Roberts, MD, PhD, director of Dana-Farber’s Research Program in Solid Tumors.

In 2006, at 9 months old, Avalanna had been diagnosed with an atypical teratoid rhabdoid tumor (AT/RT), a highly malignant brain cancer that strikes infants and toddlers. After years of aggressive treatments, Avalanna passed away in 2012. Inspired by their daughter’s courage and positivity, Aileen and Cameron Routh launched Cure AT/RT Now to raise awareness and funds to combat this rare pediatric cancer, and recently made a gift of more than $125,000 for Roberts’ research.

“Avalanna is our inspiration,” said Aileen. “The work being done by Charlie Roberts and those in his lab is remarkable,” added Cameron. “It was an easy choice to fund his research.”

Roberts has studied the biological mechanisms driving pediatric rhabdoid tumors for more than a decade.

“It has become clear that a mutation of the gene family that underlies AT/RT also underlies at least 20 percent of all cancers, including adult cancers,” said Roberts. “This generous gift from Cure AT/RT Now will support our efforts to improve treatments not only for AT/RT, but also for the host of related cancers in both adults and kids. What an outstanding tribute to an exceptional child.”

What will your legacy be?

Create your own legacy by making a planned gift to Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund

- Establish a bequest through your will or trust
- Create a Charitable Gift Annuity and receive a fixed income for life
- Designate a percentage of your retirement fund or life insurance policy

By making a planned gift, you will also become a member of the Dana-Farber Society, a group of dedicated individuals who support Dana-Farber and the Jimmy Fund in their estate plans.

To learn more, contact Alice Tobin Zaff, Assistant Vice President, Gift Planning, at 800-535-5577 or Alice.Zaff@dfci.harvard.edu
dana-farber.org/giftplanning

10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission.

Jimmy Fund Golf Appreciation Night celebrates $100 million milestone

The annual Jimmy Fund Golf Appreciation Night, held March 12 at the International Golf Club in Bolton, Mass., gathered members of the Jimmy Fund Golf community to celebrate another successful fundraising year. In 2014, more than 160 tournaments, with support from 14 program sponsors, raised more than $6.6 million for the Jimmy Fund and Dana-Farber, bringing the total raised by Jimmy Fund Golf volunteers to more than $100 million since the program’s inception in 1983.

Two exceptional tournament volunteers were selected to receive the Ken Coleman Extra Mile Award, named for the late Boston Red Sox sportscaster, who honors individuals who go above and beyond in dedicating time and energy to the mission of Dana-Farber: Michael Strong (above) of the Par Fore the Cure Golf Classic and The Golf Ball gala, which have raised more than $450,000 since 2000; and Michael Dunn (not pictured) of the Jimmy Fund/DTZ Golf and Tennis Classic, which has raised more than $2 million since 2001.

10% of all designated gifts supports our Faculty Research Fund to advance Dana-Farber’s research mission.
Impact SUMMER 2015

NVIDIA Foundation helps Dana-Farber compute the cure

As part of its “Compute the Cure” initiative, the NVIDIA Foundation recently made a $200,000 gift to support the research of John Quackenbush, PhD, at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

With this award, Quackenbush aims to create an online computer learning system that can rapidly process large data sets and uncover details about the specific mutations that drive cancer—knowledge that could lead to new and more effective treatments for patients.

Quackenbush, director of the Center for Cancer Computational Biology at Dana-Farber, will use graphics processing units (GPUs) to analyze the vast amount of information within Profile, Dana-Farber’s research initiative to collect genomic information on each patient’s cancer and to link that information with clinical data. By leveraging high-performance computing and advanced computational methods, he aims to identify previously unknown subtypes that exist within specific cancers, as well as reveal patterns of genetic mutations that bridge cancer types.

Quackenbush said, “We know now that even cancers that were once thought to be homogeneous are comprised of subtypes defined by patterns of mutation that may influence how they respond to treatment. The NVIDIA Foundation’s tremendous award will allow us to build and validate advanced algorithms capable of scaling as our patient databases grow, giving us even higher resolution to pinpoint these hidden subtypes.”

Liz Austin, senior manager at the NVIDIA Foundation, said, “We are deeply impressed by Dr. Quackenbush’s innovative use of GPUs and computational methods to accelerate his research. The potential impact of his work on patient care is exciting, and fully aligned with the NVIDIA Foundation’s goal to advance the fight against cancer.”

Anna Fuller Fund supports pancreatic cancer research

The Anna Fuller Fund was established in 1932 through the bequest of New Haven businessman Egbert Chaplin Fuller to honor his wife, who succumbed to cancer in 1918. One of the first private funds in the U.S. to specifically support cancer research, the fund aims to alleviate suffering caused by cancer through research into the cause, treatment, and care of the disease; public education on its prevention and treatment; and care of current cancer patients.

Recently, the Anna Fuller Fund awarded $100,000 to Dana-Farber physician-scientist Wolfram Goessling, MD, PhD, for his investigations in pancreatic cancer. This commitment brings the fund’s total support of Dana-Farber researchers to $500,000 since 2012.

Jim Parker, vice president of Wells Fargo Private Bank and fund co-trustee, said Goessling’s proposal was chosen because of its potential for clinical application.

“The Fund hopes that Dr. Goessling’s research will advance to the stage where it can be used clinically to address pancreatic cancer,” said Parker. “Pancreatic cancer is one of the most lethal cancers,” said Goessling. “Through the generosity of the Anna Fuller Fund, we can extend our studies into the function of novel genes identified as possible risk factors in large patient cohorts. These investigations will help us better understand the biology of pancreatic cancer, and we hope to leverage our findings to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of this disease.”

A new commitment to advance understanding of lung cancers

Robert Kaplan believes in the promise of research to find cures for deadly cancers. A longtime supporter and member of the Visiting Committee for the Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology, Kaplan, with his wife, Debra Stokes Kaplan, recently made a new gift of $100,000 to the Terri and Robert Kaplan Research Fund for Thoracic Oncology. The fund supports the research of Bruce Johnson, MD, Dana-Farber’s chief clinical research officer.

“Through the Lowe Center Visiting Committee I learned of the amazing genetic research happening at Dana-Farber. I hope that through this fund, we can find a breakthrough for those with lung cancers,” Kaplan said.

Kaplan established the fund in 2004 with his late wife, Terri, a patient of Johnson’s. Although Terri lost her battle with cancer, her legacy as a fighter lives on through this fund. Kaplan also cited the superb care Terri received at Dana-Farber as another impetus for continued support.

Debra Stokes Kaplan has also been touched by cancer and shares her husband’s commitment to discovering new treatment options. “It’s a cause that’s close to my heart,” she said.

Johnson and the Lowe Center team have made impressive progress on the genetics of non-smokers diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer. These findings have shed light on how patients with this diagnosis respond to available treatments.

“Robert’s gift will allow me and my staff to continue our investigations into the genetic profiles of patients who develop this deadly form of cancer,” Johnson said.

Anna Fuller Fund co-trustee Liz Austin, senior manager at the NVIDIA Foundation, said, “We are deeply impressed by Dr. Quackenbush’s innovative use of GPUs and computational methods to accelerate his research. The potential impact of his work on patient care is exciting, and fully aligned with the NVIDIA Foundation’s goal to advance the fight against cancer.”

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President’s Circle Appreciation Night hits it out of the park

The 9th annual President’s Circle Appreciation Night held April 14 at Fenway Park recognized the committed members of Dana-Farber’s President’s Circle giving society. President’s Circle members and their guests were celebrated at America’s most beloved ballpark while watching the Boston Red Sox take on the Washington Nationals. The pre-game reception treated guests to famous Fenway Franks and other ballpark fare while mingling with fellow President’s Circle supporters. WEEI Red Sox Radio Network broadcaster Joe Castiglione (far right) gave a warm welcome to the attendees, and Dana-Farber Chief of Staff Emeritus and Faculty Chairman of Philanthropy Stephen Sallan, MD, shared recent updates on the institute.

Support from the Anna Fuller Fund will enable Wolfram Goessling, MD, PhD, and his team of researchers to advance their investigations into the role of NR5A2 in pancreatic cancer.

“Support from the Anna Fuller Fund will enable Wolfram Goessling, MD, PhD, and his team of researchers to advance their investigations into the role of NR5A2 in pancreatic cancer.”

—Jim Parker, vice president of Wells Fargo Private Bank and Anna Fuller Fund co-trustee
In January 2007, 14-year-old Andrew McDonough helped lead his soccer team to a victory in the Pennsylvania State Championships. Within 48 hours of the big win, Andrew went into cardiac arrest and was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia (AML). Doctors did not believe he would live through the night, but Andrew fought for 166 additional days before dying on July 14, 2007. The strength and perseverance that he expressed in those days inspired friends and family to create The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation, named for Andrew’s blood type—B positive—as well as for the way he lived. In addition to supporting childhood cancer research, the B+ Foundation is one of the largest providers of financial assistance to families of kids with cancer nationwide.

Recently, The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation awarded a grant of more than $100,000 to Dana-Farber’s Evisa Gjini, PhD, for her research in childhood AML.

“This generous gift supports research into Tet2, one of the most frequently mutated genes in AML,” Gjini said. “The goal of this research is to find small molecules that will kill the AML stem cells harboring Tet2 mutations, but not the healthy stem cells, providing a novel treatment that targets AML stem cells at their origin and eliminates them with the very first initiating mutation that occurs.”

Joe McDonough, president of The Andrew McDonough B+ Foundation and Andrew’s father, said Gjini’s research ties well into the B+ mission.

“We are proud to support Dr. Gjini’s research and are optimistic that this will dramatically improve outcomes for children with AML,” McDonough said.
A s avid philanthropists in the areas of children’s welfare, education, arts, and local hospital support, Bob and Jean Faircloth of New London, N.H., and Savannah, Ga., never imagined that they would be involved with cancer. But when Jean was diagnosed with melanoma in March 2013, cancer was brought to their doorstep. After a few months of unsuccessful treatment, all roads pointed to Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and a promising clinical trial of a new immunotherapy.

“A friend of mine kept telling me to get to Dana-Farber, and when we heard about the trial, it was a no-brainer,” said Bob.

Under the care of Patrick Ott, MD, PhD, clinical director of the Melanoma Center and Center for Immuno-Oncology, Jean responded well to the treatment. In recognition of the excellent care Jean has received, the Faircloths pledged $250,000 to further Ott’s research into immunotherapy treatments for melanoma.

“We’re objective-oriented. We need to have a mission,” said Bob. “And that’s what we like about Dana-Farber and Dr. Ott’s work—that there’s a real, well-defined mission.”

“The generous support of Bob and Jean will help me and my colleagues further our understanding of patient immune profiles—who responds to treatment, who doesn’t, and why—so we can better predict tumor response to immunotherapies,” said Ott.

“We hope that Dr. Ott is successful in what is a fairly new approach to treating cancer,” said Jean.

Bob and Jean Faircloth’s gift supports research into immunotherapies for melanoma patients.

Faircloths support immunotherapy research for melanoma

H oward Cox, a longtime Institute Trustee and venture capitalist, is committed to furthering Dana-Farber’s most pioneering and entrepreneurial projects. His recent, generous gift of $200,000 to Dana-Farber’s Center for DNA Damage and Repair (CDDR) continues his long-standing support of groundbreaking Dana-Farber work.

“Dana-Farber is one of the most entrepreneurial institutions around and that’s what I like to support,” said Cox. “Dana-Farber’s innovative research is about trying new things to find results that are delivered to patients quickly.”

The CDDR, led by Alan D’Andrea, MD, co-director of Dana-Farber’s Gene Therapy Center, and Geoffrey Shapiro, MD, PhD, director of the Early Drug Development Center, focuses on studies involving DNA repair biology. Unlike normal cells, cancer cells have underlying defects in their ability to repair their own DNA. By analyzing the DNA repair defects in cancer cells, CDDR studies hope to develop new cancer drugs that can be further advanced in clinical trials.

“Financial backing of early-stage, pioneering research like that of the CDDR is vital in a time of reduced federal funding,” said Edward J. Benz Jr., MD, Institute president and CEO. “Howard’s continued dedication to Dana-Farber’s forward-thinking work brings us closer to cancer breakthroughs.”

“Dana-Farber is willing to explore new research ventures that will produce results,” Cox said. “It’s important for donors to jump-start these ventures and ‘prime the pump’ for later funding.”

A generous gift from longtime Institute Trustee and donor Howard Cox will fuel innovation at Dana-Farber’s Center for DNA Damage and Repair.

“It’s important for donors to jump-start these ventures and ‘prime the pump’ for later funding.”

—Howard Cox, Institute Trustee

Trustee gift funds innovation at Center for DNA Damage and Repair

For Harold Kirstein, hearing the words “you have cancer” was the scariest moment of his life. Following initial treatment, but not knowing what the future might hold, Kirstein sought out the expertise of Geoffrey Oxnard, MD, a physician-scientist at Dana-Farber’s Carole M. and Philip L. Lowe Center for Thoracic Oncology.

“It was so comforting to have Dr. Oxnard’s knowledge and insight not only from a medical perspective, but from a human perspective,” said Kirstein. “He treated me like I was the only patient he had to see that day, and made me feel confident that my care was on the right path.”

Kirstein and his wife, Gail, made a $100,000 gift in support of Oxnard’s efforts to evaluate whether genetic mutations can be identified from small pieces of DNA that tumors leave in the blood. Targeted treatment is based on the genetic makeup of each cancer, which can change over time and lead to treatment resistance. Currently, obtaining a tumor sample to test for mutations requires a biopsy. By requiring only a blood sample, the new approach will be less invasive and allow real-time monitoring of changes that occur in a tumor as a result of treatment.

“I’m very grateful for this support, which will help develop a novel technology for non-invasively identifying genetic mutations in cancer,” said Oxnard. “As more targeted therapies arrive in the clinic, matching patients with the right therapy for their specific tumor allows us to provide the best possible care.”

Bob and Jean Faircloth support innovative cancer genomics test

Harold and Gail Kirstein support innovative cancer genomics test

Gail and Harold Kirstein made a generous gift in support of lung cancer research.
Curing Kids Cancer fuels novel ALL research

A
ter losing their 9-year-old son to leukemia in 2003, Grainne and Clay Owen founded Georgia-based Curing Kids Cancer to support cutting-edge pediatric cancer research. Having come across the work of Dana-Farber’s Andrew Lane, MD, PhD, in a medical journal, they immediately reached out to Lane to see how they could help.

“Finding cures for childhood cancers requires funding the work of researchers, like Dr. Lane, who are breaking new ground in pediatric cancer research and treatment,” said Grainne Owen. “His findings are relevant not only to children with Down syndrome but also to many others who develop ALL.”

Lane has been actively studying why children with Down syndrome have a heightened risk of developing acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL)—more than 20 times that of the general population—and has been able to track the genetic chain of events that links Down syndrome to ALL.

“For 80 years, it hasn’t been clear why children with Down syndrome face a sharply elevated risk of ALL,” said Lane. “Generous gifts, such as the one made by Curing Kids Cancer, give me and my laboratory the ability to test new ideas that can advance our research and, ultimately, find answers.”

Curing Kids Cancer presented Lane with a $100,000 gift that they hope will advance his lab’s research into acute lymphoblastic leukemia.
For more information on all Jimmy Fund and Dana-Farber events, go to jimmyfund.org or dana-farber.org.